

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0842

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR BTRA CH US

SUBJ: NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR US-CHINA TRADE: CANTON MEETINGS

REF: PEKING 713

1. SUMMARY. MOST OF THE MEETINGS HELD BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR US-CHINA TRADE AND PRC TRADE OFFICIALS IN CANTON WERE HARMONIOUS AND POSITIVE DISCUSSIONS OF COMMERCIAL ISSUES IN US-CHINA TRADE, ACHIEVING PROGRESS IN SEVERAL AREAS. IN A MEETING WITH OFFICIAL OF THE CHEMICAL CORPORATION (MAI WEN-LAN), HOWEVER, COUNCIL REPS WERE LECTURED ON US TARDINESS IN FULFILLING THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE. MAI SAID THAT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WOULD LIMIT THE GROWTH OF US-CHINA TRADE BUT REMARKED IN PASSING THAT THE CLAIMS AND ASSETS QUESTION COULD BE SETTLED. END SUMMARY

2. MEETINGS BY NATIONAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES WITH TRADING CORPORATIONS AND CANTON FAIR OFFICIALS APRIL 16-20 GARNERED KUDOS FROM THE CHINESE ON THE COUNCIL'S POSITIVE ROLE IN US-CHINA TRADE. CHINESE OFFICIALS
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GENERALLY VOICED OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENTS OF FUTURE TRADE PROSPECTS. THE MEETING BETWEEN NATIONAL COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT SEARLES AND HONG KONG REP KAMM AND MAI WEN-LAN, LEADER OF THE CANTON DELEGATION OF THE CHINA NATIONAL CHEMICALS IMPORT AND EXPORT CORPORATION, HOWEVER, WAS AN EXCEPTION TO THE USUAL COMBINATION OF BENIGN POLITICAL PLATITUDES WITH

DISCUSSION OF COMMERCIAL ISSUES.

3. ACCORDING TO THE COUNCIL'S MEMCON OF THE MEETING, MAI QUICKLY LAUNCHED A VIGOROUS ATTACK ON THE US FAILURE TO PROGRESS ALONG THE LINE SPELLED OUT IN THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE. MAI CALLED FOR RESOLUTION OF THE TAIWAN PROBLEM ACCORDING TO THE THREE PRINCIPLES CONTRASTED THE ROC TRADE COUNCIL UNFAVORABLY TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL, AND SAID THAT FAILURE TO PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION WOULD LIMIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF US-CHINA TRADE. SEARLES FEELS MAI'S STATEMENT WAS CLEARLY PREPARED AND "FOR THE RECORD."

4. THE ONLY NEW ELEMENT INTRODUCED FOLLOWED SEARLES' COMMENT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT RESPOND POSITIVELY TO ANY NEW INITIATIVES, "INCLUDING THOSE MADE IN REGARD TO THE FROZEN CLAIMS AND ASSETS." MAI REPLIED THAT, "THE FROZEN ASSETS PROBLEM WILL CERTAINLY BE SOLVED. WHAT IS MORE CRUCIAL IS THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL RELATIONS."

5. IN OTHER MEETINGS WITH CORPORATION OFFICIALS, SEARLES AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE IMPORTER'S STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL CONFIRMED PROGRESS MADE IN PEKING AND SHANGHAI ON A NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL MATTERS OF PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO US-CHINA TRADE. IN ADDITION TO LOW-ACID FOODSTUFFS REGISTRATION (REFTEL), PROGRESS WAS ACHIEVED IN THE AREAS OF CHEMICAL SPECIFICATIONS, BRAND-NAME LABELING, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND INSPECTION OF GARMENTS BY THE CHINESE COMMODITY INSPECTION BUREAU. THESE CONCESSIONS TO US IMPORTERS' NEEDS WILL BE OF PRACTICAL UTILITY TO US BUSINESSMEN AND WILL AID IN CONTINUING THE GROWTH IN PRC EXPORTS TO THE US. THEY ARE ALSO INDICATIONS OF AT LEAST SOME DEGREE OF INCREASED FLEXIBILITY ON THE PART OF PRC TRADE OFFICIALS.

6. COUNCIL'S MEMCON OF THIS MEETING IS BEING POUCHED TO EA/PRCM.
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